

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /065 W
-----079694 191956Z /75
R 181306Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2846

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FOL SENT ACTION NEW DELHI, INFO CALCUTTA, MADRAS FROM BOMBAY
JUL 18, 1978 SIGNED COURTNEY RPTD YOU

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOMBAY 1764

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR MAHARASHTRA

1. THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNOR HAS INVITED DISSIDENT CONGRESS LEADER
SHARAD PAWAR TO FORM A GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING VASANTRAO PATIL'S
RESIGNATION YESTERDAY. THE NEW GOVERNMENT, LED BY PAWAR, IS TO
BE SWORN IN THIS AFTERNOON.

2. DEFYING THE CONGRESS (C) WORKING COMMITTEE, PAWAR AND HIS
46 LEGISLATORS (37 MLAS AND NINE MCLS) FORMED THE "MAHARASHTRA
PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATURE CONGRESS PARTY" TO ALIGN WITH THE JANATA
IN ORDER TO FORM A STATE GOVERNMENT. FOR TIME BEING AT LEAST, PAWAR
AND HIS AIDES CONTINUE TO BE THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY
OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATURE, AS THEY HAVE SEVERED THEIR CONNECTIONS
WITH MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS LEGISLATURE PARTY ONLY. FOLLOWING THE
FORMATION OF THIS NEW LEGISLATIVE GROUPING AND ITS
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DECISION TO ALIGN WITH THE JANATA PARTY TO FORM THE
GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, STATE CONGRESS (C) PRESIDENT N.M.
TIDKE SUSPENDED PAWAR AND HIS AIDES AND RECOMMENDED
THAT THE PARTY HIGH COMMAND DISMISS THEO FROM THE PARTY.
IF THEY ARE EXPELLED, THE MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS WOULD
FORMALLY SPLIT, PAVING THE WAY FOR ITS FURTHER DISINTEGRATION.

3. PAWAR SEEMS NOW TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF ABOUT 180 MLAS
IN A HOUSE OF 288. THESE INCLUDE, BESIDES HIS 37
CONGRESS (C) DISSIDENTS, 90 JANATA MEMBERS, 43 MLAS

FRIENDLY TO JANATA, AND TEN CONGRESS (I) DISSIDENTS.

4. THE CONGRESS (C) HIGH COMMAND IS REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY
WITH PAWAR'S REVOLT AND HAS GIVEN "A FREE HAND" TO FORMER
CHIEF MINISTER VASANTRAO PATIL "TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY
OF FORMING
GOVERNMENT WITH ALL THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES
IN THE STATE." A SHREWD POLITICIAN, PATIL IS UNLIKELY
TO TAKE HIS DEFEAT LYING
DOWN AND MAY TRY TO UPSET PAWAR'S
COALITION ADDING TO CHANCES OF A PERIOD OF INSTABILITY IN THE
STATE GOVERNMENT IN MONTHS TO COME.

5. CONSIDERING THE DECADE AND HALF OLD PERSONAL AND CLOSE
CHAVAN
-PAWAR RELATIONSHIP AND IN VIEW OF LATTER'S
UNCONDITIONAL AND STRONG LOYALTY TO THE FORMER, SOME LOCAL
SKEPTICS BELIEVE THAT THE PAWAR REVOLT ENJOYS THE TACIT
SUPPORT OF CHAVAN. HOWEVER, TO MAINTAIN PARTY DISCIPLINE
AND TO SAFEGUARD HIS PERSONAL POSITION AS ACTING NATIONAL
PARTY PRESIDENT, CHAVAN SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN PUBLICLY A
POSTURE OF CRITICIZING PAWAR FOR HIS REVOLT
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE10954
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780296-0991
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780748/aaaabohg.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 392f5171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1971549
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR MAHARASHTRA
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/392f5171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014